

Confluence

Fall 2018

Vibrant growth. Bulldozers shaking the building. Construction cranes out every window. Random loss of power. I don't need to leave my office to be reminded how fast our region is growing: a 342-unit apartment building is going up across the street and 60 townhomes are being built on 3 acres behind our office.

At the same time, during a Saturday morning visit to Brumley I saw more than 50 people, ages 5 to 75 hiking, dog walking, and mountain biking.

Newcomers and those of us who've lived here for decades love the region not only for its vibrant economy and great restaurants, but also for the open space, biking and hiking trails, clean water, and local farms to grow our food.

This past year TLC saw an outpouring of support for conservation from long-time donors and new members who understand the urgency and importance of our land, water, farm, and wildlife protection work.

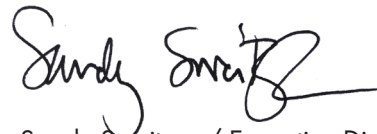
In response to the rapid pace of development and your enthusiasm TLC board and staff updated the strategic plan approved in 2014. We had already surpassed most of goals we set for 2020! TLC's new 2025 Strategic Action Plan sets new, aggressive conservation

and community engagement goals—with increased emphasis on safeguarding clean drinking water.

We will continue to need you, our loyal supporters, to implement the strategies to reach those goals. Let's celebrate that we've protected almost 19,000 acres in 35 years and stay tuned for details of how we plan to protect 25,000 acres by 2025.

You may have heard that TLC had three open positions this summer—all were created to help us keep up with the urgent need to conserve more land across the Triangle.

We also have a slate of new board member candidates for you to vote on. The nominating committee strives to balance expertise, age, race, and geography while looking for people passionate about conservation. This new slate reflects all of that and more. I hope you'll take a minute to look at their profiles and vote online today. You'll have a chance to meet many of them at the upcoming TLC membership day on October 7th.



Sandy Sweitzer / Executive Director



Board of Directors

Jack Clayton, *Treasurer*
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Alan Hughes

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Russell Killen
Wendee Smith
Danielle Spurlock
Tahz Walker
Jennifer Zuckerman

Our Vision - We see the Triangle region as an increasingly healthy and vibrant place to live where wild and working lands are protected and everyone has access to open space, clean water, and local food.

Staff

Nate Burns, Stewardship Associate
Caroline Durham, Stewardship Associate
Chris Fowler, Communications Manager
Leigh Ann Hammerbacher, Senior Associate Director of Conservation
Robert (Bo) Howes, Director of Conservation & Stewardship
George C. Jones, Jr., Senior Conservation Manager
Carla M. Nunn, Director of Finance & Administration
Matt Rutledge, Associate Director of Stewardship
Margaret Sands, Community Engagement Manager
Sandy Sweitzer, Executive Director
Casey Therrien, Development Manager
Walt Tysinger, Senior Land Manager
Christine Wilson, Director of Development







Bikes, Water, and Soul

A transformational 730 mile journey. Eleven students from Orange County set out from Chapel Hill on the bicycle ride of a lifetime in July, 2018. Starting at the upper end of the Neuse River Watershed and following the Neuse all the way down to the Atlantic Ocean and back, each person in the group, along with 5 support staff, had an unforgettable experience.

“We believe that given the opportunity, anyone can reach their full potential,” explains Kevin Hicks, founder and Executive Director of
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Triangle Bikeworks. Spoke ‘n Revolution (SnR) is a program of Triangle Bikeworks, which offers annual bicycling tours for high school students to build connections to the past, the outdoors, to each other, and themselves. Positive personal transformation is the goal.

The inaugural 2011 SnR trip traced the routes of Buffalo Soldiers as well as Lewis and Clark’s expedition all the way to Portland, Oregon. Since that first trip, the SnR tours have explored routes along the Underground Railroad, the Trail of Tears, the Gullah Geechee Cultural

Heritage Corridor, and beyond. The program is unique in that it links often-hidden histories and uncommon educational experiences with the demanding physical, mental, and emotional challenges of pedaling such great distances.

“It’s such an exciting concept,” Leigh Ann Hammerbacher, TLC’s Senior Associate Director of Conservation and Stewardship explains. “After hearing Kevin describe previous tours at a conference, I thought the Neuse River Watershed and its people might offer an interesting curriculum and route. Plus, TLC has a lot to offer along the way since three of our preserves and hundreds of acres of protected land are in the Neuse River watershed.”

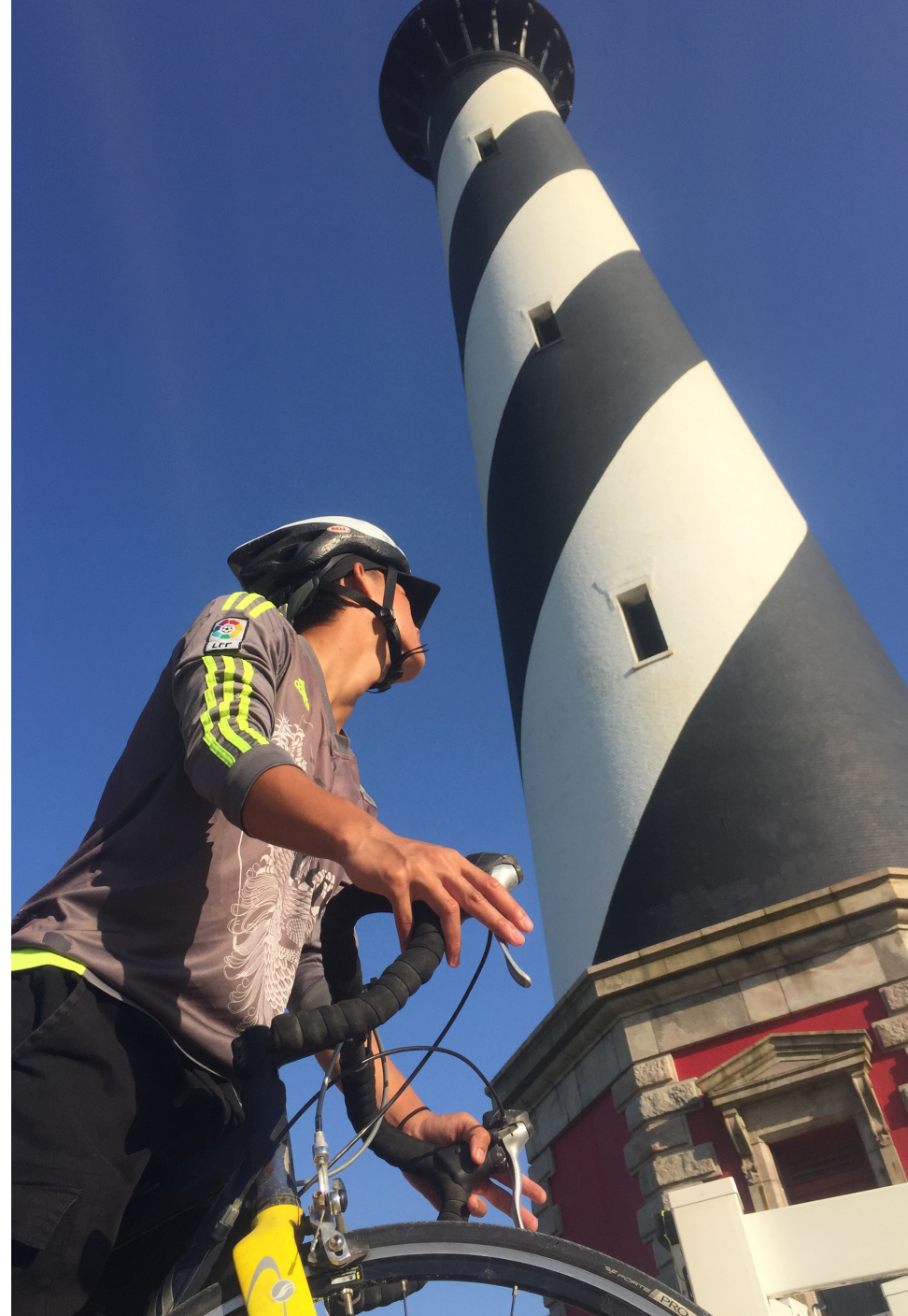
“teens make *shift* happen by exploring connections between people and water.”

Kevin agreed, “It was a natural connection. I’m a conservationist at heart and the river route provides so many great educational opportunities all the way down to the coast.” This year’s SnR tour was dubbed Bikes, Water, and Soul. Triangle Bikeworks announced the trip in March and described it as a route where “teens make shift happen by exploring connections between people and water.”

Working closely, TLC, Triangle Bikeworks, and Conservation Trust for North Carolina designed a route that explored the Upper Neuse Region with educational opportunities that uncovered regional history and conservation issues. One of the first stops was TLC’s Brumley Nature Preserve, where riders were greeted by TLC staff and a presentation about how the Preserve protects the City of Raleigh’s drinking water. Margaret Sands, TLC’s Community Engagement Manager, led the workshop that day and described how the water that flows through Stony Creek will eventually drain into the Eno River and beyond into Falls Lake, the City of Raleigh’s drinking water reservoir.

After visiting Brumley, the route led to stops at Historic Stagville and Horton Grove Nature Preserve, Falls Lake, and finally down the Neuse River Greenway to the future Sarah and Bailey Williamson Preserve at Walnut Hill.

The tour was filled with adventure, discovery, and a few potholes and flat tires as they teens biked along the Neuse River to the Atlantic Ocean, up the Outer



Photos courtesy Triangle Bikeworks

Banks, back through the Great Dismal Swamp and all the way back to Chapel Hill. Each day they pedaled between 30 and 80 miles, which required significant physical and mental preparation. In the weeks leading up to the tour, regular training sessions were held to build stamina, pace, and teamwork. Additionally, a documentary workshop was organized prior to the tour to equip riders with tools and techniques to capture and share their stories from the road. Be on the lookout for a short video featuring their voices and videos in the weeks to come.

“I honestly expected this to be one of the hardest things that I’ve ever done. Parts of it were very difficult. I was surprised at how easy it was compared to what I had built it up to be in my head...This showed me that I can do a lot of things that I think that I can’t do.”

In addition to scheduled educational stops and water breaks, most evenings were spent under the night sky in tents at camp sites along the way. Journaling, video diaries, and conversations around campfires were part of the daily regimen. On the final evening of the tour, Kevin asked the group to share their takeaways from the journey. Several of the riders echoed gratitude for the bonds made and relationships built through the shared experiences of training and learning together and supporting one another through intense physical and emotional moments of their excursion.

Another theme was the inner confidence that this experience has provided the participants. One biker explained “I honestly expected this to be one of the hardest things that I’ve ever done. Parts of it were very difficult. I was surprised at how easy it was compared to what I had built it up to be in my head. I kind of sell myself short a lot of the time, when it comes to things that I can and cannot do. This showed me that I can do a lot of things that I think that I can’t do.”

Around the same campfire, Kevin shared his thoughts, “You all walked away learning about conservation, environmental justice, the importance of healthy and clean water—you took it from the headwaters of Falls Lake into the ocean... You’ve experienced hidden history that’s not in your school, you’ve experienced a physical demand on your body that you consciously put yourself through--it’s not like playing basketball, it’s not like running track--this is prolonged, you have to wake up in the morning deciding to get back on your bike. We conquered that. You’ve learned about each other, you’ve learned about yourself. Look at the growth that you’ve made since that first five-mile training ride. Pat yourself on the back. You completed a 730 mile tour in two weeks. You are now officially Spoke ‘n Revolutions alumni.” 🌿

For more information about Triangle Bikeworks, please visit www.trianglebikeworks.org and to learn more about the Upper Neuse Clean Water Initiative, visit www.triangleland.org/upper-neuse-clean-water-initiative.







Wake County Land Conserved

Triangle Land Conservancy closed on a new conservation project on June 22, 2018 in Wake County. This was the second phase of a two part project. This acquisition includes 30.17 acres of forested land, farmland, and stream corridor adjacent to US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) land on Falls Lake. This farm property contains nearly 1600 feet of headwater streams and two ponds. We have protected a total of 66 contiguous acres now that both phases are complete. In the process of acquiring this property, TLC discovered a considerable amount of debris, including buried fuel tanks, abandoned cars, and tires. We mitigated these potential hazards by hiring a contractor to extract and haul away four tractor trailers worth of waste, and we are confident that this action will contribute to enhancing water quality at Falls Lake. The project is funded by the City of Raleigh (UNCWI) and Wake County. We will grant conservation easements on both phases to Wake County in the coming weeks. 🌱



Meet Stanback Intern Emily Tucker

The Stanback Internship Program provides students at Duke with meaningful project-based experience in conservation and related fields. The program is a partnership between the Nicholas School of the Environment and selected conservation organizations throughout the United States, including Triangle Land Conservancy. This summer Emily Tucker was TLC's Stanback Intern, and her work mapped habitat connectivity in our region to help inform our conservation planning and priorities in the future.

Tell us about your project?

When approaching conservation planning there are a multitude of ways a landscape can be examined for conservation efforts. Strict quantitative measures provide a solid foundation to identify tracts of land displaying desirable qualities for conservation; however, focusing solely on quantitative metrics often leads to a narrow view of the landscape. By incorporating patch to patch proximity, location along least cost paths and least cost corridors, we are able to create a more comprehensive view of the region.

In the habitat connectivity model created for Triangle Land Conservancy, I began with a basic analysis of landscape metrics to identify tracts of land useful to conservation based solely on quantitative benchmarks and followed up with connectivity measures. The result was a ranked list of potential habitat patches that could be sorted according to Triangle Land Conservancy's conservation goals or needs. As a Land Trust that looks at conservation through four different lenses (water quality, wildlife habitat, connecting people with nature,

and working lands), the ability to rank land acquisition targets across many categories was essential. And while this analysis was kept intentionally broad for this very reason, there is the opportunity to tailor the model to a specific organism should the need arise.

Why were you interested in working with TLC?

Growing up in a small town on the California coast, I was sandwiched between the Pacific Ocean and foothills that were in large part maintained by local land protection agencies. As I've grown older, I've witnessed the tiny coastal town in which I grew up be more and more crowded, and especially now that I've moved away, whenever I return home I am shocked by the level of development and so utterly grateful for the forethought and hard work of those land protection agencies. I view TLC as a similar sort of organization, one that is rooted in small communities, inspiring them to take pride in their natural resources, while simultaneously pushing the envelope with innovative new approaches to land conservation (such as the Upper Neuse Clean Water Initiative) and enacting change on a large scale. It's exciting to be a part of such an energetic and forward-thinking team.

What was your journey like leading up to graduate school?

In the four years since receiving a B.S. in Marine Biology from UC Santa Cruz, I have had the pleasure of working for the University of California and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/National Marine Fisheries Service on various marine and



freshwater projects. Each project has in some way been geared towards monitoring the health and viability of species experiencing declines due to changing climatic conditions, whether it was with abalone, seastars, Pacific salmon or seagrasses. I found my work with NOAA on the threatened and endangered salmon populations in California and Oregon to be a particularly powerful and motivating experience that has spurred me to return to graduate school. It so perfectly illuminated the urgency and level of innovative thinking required to devise management plans in the face of new climatic conditions. We can no longer cling to the idea that what has worked in the past will work today. I want to be a part of the force that is changing with the times. Duke's Nicholas School of the Environment was where I could see myself learning how to implement the change I wanted to see, and with one year completed and one to go, I could not be happier with my decision. 🌱



Sarah and Bailey Williamson Preserve at Walnut Hill



George Jones
Senior Manager of Conservation

Over the past year, TLC has significantly increased activity at Walnut Hill in preparation for opening the Preserve in 2020. As part of this process, TLC increased local participation to develop a vision for the preserve through an advisory group. That group includes representatives from the local community, landowners, TLC staff, Knightdale High School and agricultural resource professionals. The group meets bimonthly and is developing a vision and template for activities on the site.

Shortly after Senior Conservation Manager, George Jones, joined our team, TLC contracted with Regenerative Design Group (RDG) to develop the Agricultural Master Plan for the Sarah and Bailey Williamson Preserve at Walnut Hill. RDG will work closely with TLC and its advisors to complete a comprehensive site plan that strengthens local food and farm production and the ecological functions of the land. The approach is titled, “Connecting regenerative farming to human health” which includes the formation of Walnut Hill Farms through a series of strategic partnerships including with Apiopolis, The Center of Environmental

Farming Systems (CEFS), the Wake County NextGen Farmer program, and Wake County Government: Soil and Water Conservation District, Cooperative Extension Offices, and the Wake County Public Schools System in partnership with Knightdale High School (KHS).

Support from the Triangle Community Foundation, the Cannon Foundation, and the Jandy Ammons Foundation has been essential to the development and planning of the preserve. Funding has allowed TLC to bring on consultants and other resources to develop this one-of-a-kind farm and nature preserve. We have already started renovating and restoring multiple structures on the property and are developing water resources for future farmers and recreational visitors. With these strong partnerships, our goal is to create a preserve that will be a restorative landscape connecting all members of the community to historical, agricultural, and natural resources. 🌱

White Pines Expansion and TLC's 35th Birthday Party

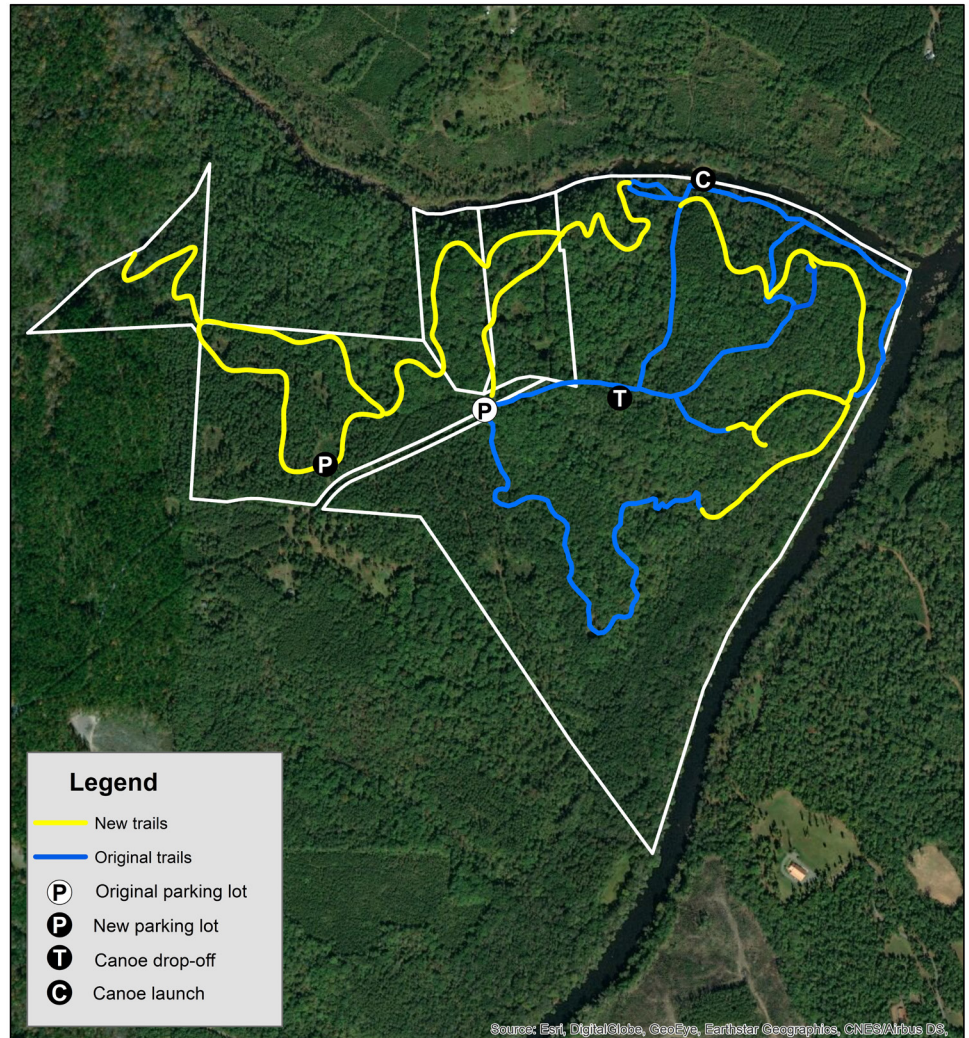
Thirty-five years ago, a dedicated group of volunteers founded Triangle Land Conservancy. Soon after, White Pines Nature Preserve in Chatham County became TLC's first major land purchase project when we bought 136 acres in 1987. Thanks to the support of our members, we've come a long way since then. Today, TLC has conserved nearly 19,000 acres and manages 7 public nature preserves. White Pines Nature Preserve has grown to 270 acres and just got an exciting update with additional miles of trail, a new parking lot, a boat drop off, and a canoe launch!

Our members are still at the core of what we do for the wild and working lands of the Triangle. You get the word out about land conservation, attend TLC events and bring your friends, champion conservation projects, and are our best ambassadors in the community. This year we are celebrating in Chatham County to thank you for all that you do to improve lives through conservation!

We hope you will join us for TLC's 35th Birthday Party! On Sunday, October 7th you will have 3 ways to celebrate 35 years of conservation in the Triangle:

1. The very first White Pines paddle trip! Join Frog Hollow at 10 AM to push off from the brand new canoe landing and explore the Deep River.

2. A guided White Pines walk to tread the new trails added to this ancient microclimate. Meet the white pine trees that inspired the name and the staff members who make trail building possible.



3. Toast to TLC at our Annual Meeting at the Lorax Lane Plant in Pittsboro with Chatham Ciderworks and Fair Game Beverage. Join us for refreshments, libations, updates about our work in Chatham County, our newly updated Strategic Action Plan, and to meet our new board members.

Please register at <https://www.triangleland.org/explore/events> so we will know how many to expect. 🌲

Vote for New Board Members

We have ambitious goals for the next 7 years, including conserving 6,000 additional acres in the Triangle, and we hope you will help us achieve them. We also want to toast the last 35 years of conservation work that permanently protects almost 19,000 acres. As part of our Membership Day activities, we'll also invite members to cast their ballots for first term nominees. Triangle Land Conservancy's charter and by-laws state that members shall elect the Board of Directors. The Nominating Committee is responsible for identifying a slate of candidates for Board membership. The Nominating Committee submits the slate of candidates to the TLC Board for its approval.

The Board-approved slate is now presented to the membership for a vote, which will be conducted online. The ballot requires a yes or no vote for each of the nominees for Board membership by October 6, 2018.

We'll announce the results on October 7, 2018.

We would like to extend thanks to Dean Urban, Delphine Sellars, John McAdams, Chris Hitt, and the late Phail Wynn, whose terms concluded on June 30, 2018 for their service and leadership to Triangle Land Conservancy.

Below is a list of first term nominees and a quote from each candidate about why they are excited to serve on TLC's Board.

Jack Blackmer (Wake) - "I am excited for the opportunity to help shape TLC's policies and procedures to continue our focus on the (4) public benefits of conservation as our main mission. I feel especially passionate about the importance of conserving and protecting important natural areas and I appreciate working with others on the Board and TLC staff that share that passion."

Sam Cook (Wake) - "Helping landowners to understand the importance of protecting our natural resources."

Toni Wyche Jones (Wake) - "With the threat of rising sea levels, animal habitats disappearing, and changes in weather patterns, I would like to direct my career path in a way that protects public health and natural resources. I am excited about the opportunity to work alongside individuals that have a common interest and passion."

David Morris (Durham) - "I am excited to be working with other engaged community members to help preserve our natural resources so that future generations will have the opportunity to enjoy open spaces, clean water, and locally sourced foods."

Sean Wilson (Chatham) - "The opportunity to give back to an organization that has forever shaped my family's life and well-being. A desire to protect land for technology-free wandering and discovery. An appreciation for families and trusts who place land preservation and environmental health over unbridled commercial development."

Please find more information about these candidates and cast your ballot by October 6, 2018 at <https://www.triangleland.org/vote> 🌿





Wild Ideas

Triangle Land Conservancy's Wild Ideas series provides a unique venue for experts and the community to share their innovative ideas to improve lives through conservation by safeguarding clean water, protecting wildlife habitat, supporting local farms and food, and connecting people with nature.

Save the date for the next installment of Wild Ideas: November 13, 2018 as we focus on the future of conservation in our region. We will feature TLC's new strategic action plan designed to accelerate the pace of conservation in the Triangle. Join us for fast-paced talks, free food, and local beer as we celebrate the past and explore the possibilities for protecting land for tomorrow.

On June 12th we launched our first Wild Ideas for Getting Outside on the GO with an engaging lunch & learn event at SEPI Engineering. This dynamic new Wild Ideas offering featured presentations by speakers from Friends of Mountains-to-Sea Trail, Knightdale High School of Collaborative Design and TLC. Employees had an opportunity to explore our region and encounter wild ideas for how they could get involved! If you're interested in bringing a presentation to your workplace please contact Christine Wilson at (919) 908-0059 for more information. Details and registration for Wild Ideas events may be found at triangleland.org/wild 🌿



Photos by Don Kinney at Mother Earth Images LLC

Thanks to our Wild Ideas sponsors!



**BlueCross BlueShield
of North Carolina**



Upcoming Events

Registration for many TLC events is limited and required. Please register and reserve your spot online at: triangleland.org/events.

October

03 Walnut Wednesday
9:00am-12:00pm at Walnut Hill | Help us get this preserve ready to open to the public with invasive species removal, fencing repair, property cleanup, and trail building when that portion of the project gets underway.

07 TLC's Birthday Party
White Pines Nature Preserve | We hope you will join us for TLC's 35th Anniversary Celebration and Annual Meeting! Join Frog Hollow at 10 AM to push off from the brand new canoe landing and explore the Deep River. Later, there's a White Pines Member Walk to tread the new trails added to this ancient microclimate. Meet the White Pine

trees that inspired the name and the staff members who make trail building possible. Finally, we'll have a toast to TLC at the Lorax Lane Plant in Pittsboro with Chatham Ciderworks and Fair Game Beverage. Join us for refreshments, libations, updates about our work in Chatham County and our newly updated Strategic Action Plan.

November

13 Wild Ideas Join us for fast-paced talks, free food, and local beer as we celebrate the past and explore the possibilities for protecting land for tomorrow.

17 Meteors at Midnight
11:00pm-1:00am at Horton Grove Nature Preserve | Join us for a special evening visit to Horton Grove Nature Preserve to see the peak of the Leonids Meteor Shower.



Please look for us in your workplace giving campaign!

Your vote counts! See inside
for information about
TLC's Board election and
Annual Meeting.



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